

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 683

By Cohen

A RESOLUTION to designate the 4th Tuesday in February as
Spay Day Tennessee.

WHEREAS, various animal species have been companions, beasts of burden, or pets of humankind since several thousand years ago when our ancestors began to domesticate wolves prowling near their camps and began to develop dogs as hunting companions and guards; and

WHEREAS, over our history, more and more animals have been domesticated by humans and have been put to work or have been made pets; and

WHEREAS, throughout the last few decades, an unfortunate trend has developed in our society in which many people regard pets as throwaway possessions to be enjoyed when convenient and then discarded; often little or no precautions are taken by owners to prevent unwanted reproduction, resulting in the growth of feral populations that may endanger children or livestock through predation or disease; and

WHEREAS, the lives of unwanted and homeless pets are often short, brutal, and filled with fear, hunger, and disease; animals who may have experienced some initial affection, play, and care are often suddenly discarded and homeless, and become a problem for governments; and

WHEREAS, while there are no statewide statistics regarding the number of animals sheltered in Tennessee, a survey of nine counties - Blount, Jefferson, Knox, Loudon, Montgomery, Putnam, Shelby, Tipton, and Union - comprising 30 percent of the state's population, reveals that 47,190 animals were taken in by those communities and 33,646 of those were euthanized; and

WHEREAS, if national pet ownership statistics are consistent across Tennessee, approximately five percent of the state's pet population is destroyed due to an insufficient

number of homes each year; these figures do not take into account those animals killed on the highways or by farmers protecting their stock, or dying from hunger, disease, or exposure; and

WHEREAS, the number of unwanted pets could be significantly reduced if owners would practice responsible pet ownership and spay and neuter their cats and dogs to eliminate unplanned reproduction; and

WHEREAS, National Spay Day USA falls on February 24, 2004, this year and the participation of Tennessee in that observance could set Tennessee on the way to reducing the burden of unwanted pets on local governments as well as eliminating much misery that now exists in the population of homeless animals in this state; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that the fourth Tuesday in February of each year is hereby designated as "Spay Day Tennessee", and all pet owners and prospective pet owners within the state are urged to have their pets spayed or neutered, if not intended for breeding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.